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Higher Criticism.

WHAT IS ITS EFFECT ON
THE TEACHING OF
THE BIBLE?



For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? *even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God.*

Now we have received, *not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*

Which things also we speak *not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth: comparing spiritual things with spiritual, (interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men, R. V. Margin).*

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Cor. 2: 11-14).



Higher Criticism.

What is the effect on the teaching of the Bible?

As far as can be determined from the expression of its teaching given by some of its more prominent exponents in this country, higher criticism appears to be a polite religious phase of modern infidelity, through which Satan, by his wiles, seeks to entrap the unwary more successfully than he can do through open and avowed infidelity. In other words, higher criticism seems to be a guise of Satan, while masquerading as an angel of light.

Infidel statements carry little weight with most people, as emanating from an avowedly infidel source; but when such statements come to us through what we are prone to regard as properly accredited religious channels, they are fraught with danger, inasmuch as they are presented to us in the guise of truth, and with all the prestige of those whom we have been wont to consider its hereditary guardians. The hidden dagger, in the sleeve of a professed friend, is more dangerous than the openly brandished weapon, in the hand of a known enemy.

Let us notice a single statement made by one who has come prominently before the public as an exponent of higher criticism, and see whether it is not infidel in its bearing on Scripture, when followed to its legitimate conclusion. The statement I refer to is, that the first eleven chapters of Genesis are a myth.

The gentleman who made this statement, subsequently acknowledged that it was one not free from reproach, not however, on the ground that it was incorrect, but because, to the minds of many, it suggested what is false. But this, says our critic, is a misunderstanding of the word (myth). Thus, our readers

will notice, that this critic still maintains his ground, as to the word myth having its proper application to the first eleven chapters of Genesis, if properly understood.

As properly understood, then, the word may be taken to mean, that the account of creation is a myth, and not an historical fact, that there never really existed such persons as our first parents, Adam and Eve, in a state of innocence; that they never really fell through disobedience and sin; that they never incurred the penalty of death; for Adam and Eve, the temptation, the fall, the entrance of sin and its penalty, death, the serpent, his judgment, and the redemption of man, through the Seed of the woman, are all a myth.

But the author of the statement referred to, at a later date, modified it, by saying that he believes the whole Bible to be inspired, including the first eleven chapters of Genesis. That is to say, he credits the Living God, the author of the Bible, with being the author of a myth.

In this connection, it may be interesting to know what we are to understand by a myth, as our critic seems to think that the fault lies not so much with the word used, as, in the real meaning of the word being so little understood by people generally.

The definition given in the Imperial Dictionary and Cyclopedia, for the word myth is, *a fable*. The literal meaning, as applied in a general sense, is, *a fiction framed unconsciously, not a wilful falsehood*.

As applied in a special sense, philosophically, it is, according to George, *the evolving of an imaginary fact from an idea*. The word is also used figuratively, 1st, with reference to *any statement partly or wholly fabulous*; 2nd, as a euphemism (or *Polite word*), for *a falsehood*; and 3rd, with reference to *a person or thing which does not exist*. As, for example, he is a myth.

From the above definition. we are to understand that, in acknowledging God as the author of the whole Bible, including the first eleven chapters of Genesis, *our critic credits God with being the author of a fable, or of a fiction framed unconsciously, but that, inasmuch as He framed the fable or a fiction unconsciously, he is not really guilty of a wilful or deliberate falsehood. What blasphemy! Could any avowed infidel or atheist go further in his denial of God's word, or as the maligner of its author?*

But again, we learn from the definition of the word in a special or philosophical sense, that the history of the creation of man, his fall, sin, death, and the seed of the woman which was to bruise the Serpent's head, *are not real but imaginary facts* evolved from an idea. In other words God in giving us the first eleven chapters of Genesis *is the author, not of real, but imaginary facts* evolved from an idea, in the same way that the Romans of the Augustan age, out of the idea as to how their polity arose, created or framed the narrative of the mythical personage, Aeneas, his misfortunes, his wanderings and his settlement in Italy.

In this same sense, then, according to our critic, we are to understand that Adam and Eve, the fall, sin, death, and the seed of the woman, *are merely a myth, on a par with the fabled Aeneas*, the creation of the fertile human imagination.

If we are to take the figurative sense of the word myth as applied to the first eleven chapters of Genesis by our critic we are to understand him as meaning that these chapters are 1st, *partly or wholly fabulous*: 2nd as saying in a euphemistic (or *polite*) way, *that these chapters with the historic events they contain, are a huge fabrication or falsehood* and 3rd that the persons or things of which they speak *never had an existence, save in the imagination of God Himself*

So much for the efforts of the enemy, through so-called higher criticism, against the word of God in Genesis, the seed plot of the Bible; where we have the whole word of God and the whole Christ of God in germ, crush or kill the precious life in its embryonic or formative stage, and you need not fear its adult energies, argues the enemy of God and Man; and how can this be accomplished so well as through those *who profess to sow the precious seed*, to watch and nurture the tender life, and to be the conservators of the full-grown energies of the perfect being? Only allow such to perform their deadly work undisturbed under my instruction and supervision and I have no fear of the result, says the arch enemy for what they have made of the mythical seed-plot is: *no Adam, no fall, no sin, no death and no hope, nor need indeed, of redemption through the seed of the woman.*

But what of the New Testament? where reference is made to Adam and to Christ, to the fall of man and redemption, to the entrance of sin and the putting away of it, to death and resurrection. What does higher criticism make of 1 Cor. 15:20:22? But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for, as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

We notice here, that the New Testament treats the coming in of death by man, and the man who brought it in, *not as a myth, but as a matter of history*, just as it treats the resurrection of Christ, the Second Man, the Lord from heaven, who brings in the resurrection of the dead, or life out of death.

This Scripture distinctly states that, *as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. The one statement is here regarded just as much a matter of history, as the other is a prophetic statement of what will take place through the resurrection life of Christ; namely, life from the dead for perishing men.*

But then, the statement that, by man came death, and that all died in Adam, is a myth, says this higher critic of Genesis: because there really never was such a person as Adam, and no fall, no sin, no death, and no hope of redemption through the seed of the woman. Yet here we have the authority of the Spirit of God.. through the Apostle Paul, for the statement, that the first man brought in death, just as much as for the co-relative statement, that the Second Man ended death by rising from the dead; and the very same authority for the statement that all died in Adam, as for the attending statement that all shall live in Christ.

The inevitable conclusion, then, of such a critical treatment of the truths of Genesis, when taken in connection with New Testament teaching is, that, if there was no Adam, there is no Christ; if there was no death brought in by the first man, there is no resurrection brought in through the Second Man. If in the first Adam, as the head and progenitor of his race, all did not die, then it must be accepted as equally true, that in Christ the Last Adam all shall not be made alive. Thus we have no Adam, no Christ, no fall, no redemption, and no need of it in the higher critic's Bible. No death, no resurrection, no death in Adam, no life in Christ for perishing men, no fall in Adam, nor prospect of redemption through the Seed of the woman to mee: it; for the higher critics have left no redemption from cover to cover of God's blessed book. They have effectually done away with the fall of man and the man who fell. They cannot deny that we see men all around us to-day, and claim manhood for themselves; but, say they, man has arrived at his present state of semi-perfection by development, and he is going still further to evolve, until he reaches up to Godhead; thus verifying the statement of him who was a liar from the beginning, ye shall not surely die; but your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Much of that which professes Christianity to-day is simply a modification of this human evolution, the striving

after and attainment of a higher plane of humanity, the idea and the ambition for which man derived from the enemy in Eden.

Man, as inspired by the enemy, and thus set on his line of self improvement, naturally seeks a high standard of morals and practice. In thus seeking to attain a high standard of moral excellence; in the effort to reach it *and thus exalt himself*, he sets before him the highest possible standard; and often asks himself, under certain conditions, or in given circumstances, *What would Christ do?* Having answered this question to his own satisfaction, he then proceeds along the line of self improvement, to follow, *as he thinks, in His steps.*

In this the enemy's line for him *that of good works* he is urged on and encouraged by a certain class of modern religious literature, which is found in the hands of the young almost everywhere; and many older people, both converted and unconverted, are much attracted and impressed by the covert infidelity which such books are calculated to instil.

Such literature, while it sets before its readers the idea of evolution up to Christ, so consonant with man's natural ambition as a fallen being, does away altogether with the Christ of the Bible, a crucified, risen and glorified Christ, a Christ who alike meets the deepest need of man as a sinner and the highest claims of the Glory of God.

The teaching of such literature is that travesty of Christianity which, as inspired by man's natural ambition, lures him on, as the dupe and tool of the enemy, to his wrecker's goal the blackness of darkness forever, while keeping him occupied with and earnestly striving to reach his wrecker's decoy, the ignis fatuus of human ambition, the glory of man.

Man will never cease his efforts in the direction of his natural religiousness, as a fallen being, until he will at length find a fitting representative of his loftiest ambition, and the object of his heart's worship, in the person of a man, who, having reached the goal of his ambition, and the climax of human presumption in a religious

way, will sit in the temple of God showing himself that he is God (2 Thess. 2.4).

The presence of the Spirit of God restrains in measure the full development of evil; so that the usurper of the rights and title of Christ has not yet been manifested in the scene; but we see the spirit and mystery of iniquity, or lawlessness, abroad on every hand, displaying itself in the daring presumption of natural man in the things of God, in the activity of man's mind seeking by its unaided powers to limit and comprehend the infinite, and to set aside as mere myth, fable, or human tradition, what it cannot bring within the narrow compass of its feeble, finite powers.

In the day that thou eatest thereof *thou shalt surely die*, were the words of the one living and true God, the creator and preserver of His creature man, when He had placed him in the garden of Eden, in the midst of all the rich profusion of bounty, which His goodness alone had supplied. But the tempter appeared upon this fair scene and gave man his first lesson, in tampering with the word of God, *Ye shall not surely die*, said the enemy; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, *and ye shall be as gods*, knowing good and evil

This was man's first lesson, he acted on it, and has been an apt pupil in the devil's school ever since As a fallen being, he prides himself on his opened eyes and his knowledge of good and evil which he acquired through disobedience and sin. For nearly six thousand years man has been developing under the enemy's training, and in no respect has he made more rapid progress than as a meddler with the word of God. How the pride of the human intellect delights in displaying its prowess in the things of God; and that too in the very face of the fact that we are specially warned in God's word against the enticing or persuasive words of man's wisdom. Why this warning? The reason for it is given in the verse following, namely, *that our faith might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.* (1 Cor. 2.4-5).

The enemy was persuasive when he appeared to the woman in the garden, he is enticing and persuasive still. The experience of nearly six thousand years has not detracted from his skill as a teacher; and alas! Man away from God, as his pupil, has learned his lesson well. There was a time when the chief assaults of the enemy upon the word of God were through avowed infidelity; but now he has discovered a more persuasive and successful way. He seeks now to attack the word of God through its professed friends; and Christ is wounded in the house of His friends. (See Zechariah 13:6)

The enemy is now seeking access to the youth of our land through its seats of learning, through our schools, colleges and universities; where those who are to wield the chief influence in the affairs of men receive their training. Especially does he seek to reach those who are to be teachers of youth, spiritual advisers, religious teachers, and preachers of the gospel, by indoctrinating them in much that is science falsely so-called, in higher criticism, in the doctrine of evolution, or development, and kindred vagaries of the human intellect; in which the mind of man takes so much pride; and which are so wholly incompatible with the integrity of Scripture; in order thus to poison the pure streams of the living word at the fountain head.

The enemy knows well that Scripture is a living whole: that each and every part of it is so interlaced and interwoven with every other part, that to weaken a single link in the chain of revelation, to add to it, or take from it, is to weaken the whole; that to dilute or pollute it in its streams or at its source, is to rob it of its life giving energy; and thus give us a mutilated Christ, not the living Word of God and the Bible, the full and perfect expression of the mind and heart of God.

It has always been man's role, as a fallen being, to tone down the Bible, as a moral code, to the plane of his moral necessities and practice, and, while sett-

ing aside the cross which gives him no place of recognition save that of judgment, to refuse the grace which has come for his relief, but which can only reach him on the ground of accomplished redemption and the acknowledgment on his part of the rights of God made good at the cross, as against all that he is, and all that he has done as a child of Adam, and a proper subject for the righteous judgment of God.

To so tone down the Bible to man's moral level, to do away with the cross which gives man no place save in judgment, and thus to enable the natural man to follow in the steps of Christ, seem to be the enemy's line of teaching to-day. This leaves room for man to evolve or develop up to a higher plane of humanity, as it has been lately put by one who favors higher criticism. This we believe to be the line of higher criticism which, by setting aside the creation and fall of man, and the redemption of God, leaves nothing for man to desire or attain, save the realization of the enemy's promised goal, and the climax of his own ambition, "ye shall be as gods".

It is vain for higher critics to profess that it is a matter of indifference, as to the teaching of the Bible, whether the first eleven chapters of Genesis be considered a myth or a matter of history. It is indeed an insult to ordinary intelligence to say so; and, as the reader is aware, I have already demonstrated in connection with 1 Cor. 15:20:22, that it is a matter of the very gravest import which view is taken.

No Christian dare deny, and retain the name of Christian, that the birth, life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ are matters of history; and yet these events are mentioned side by side with those which recognize Adam, the fall, the entrance of sin and death. *Is the one set of events any less a matter of history than the other? Is there not equal; and the very highest authority for both as matters of history? And to what does the passage in 1 Cor. 15: 20: 22 refer, when speaking of Adam, the fall, the entrance of sin and death, if not to the historical account in Genesis? Just as the same passage refers to Christ, his death and resurrection, as matters of history, recorded by the Spirit of God through the evangelists.*

We have, therefore, the authority of God, "who cannot lie," for claiming that the first eleven chapters of Genesis are historically true; and we have the authority of those who presume to call themselves higher critics, that these chapters are a myth. God cannot lie. It is evident that somebody does, who is it? "Let God be true, but every man a liar".

A SIMPLE CHRISTIAN.

To The

Hon. S. H. Blake,
with the Compliments
of the author,

H. Ross,

Clifford,

Ont.